

# Aggieland

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STATE

**ALSO INSIDE**

FOOTBALL REWIND  
MEN'S BASKETBALL GUIDE  
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GUIDE  
AND MORE...

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trayveon williams joins elite group

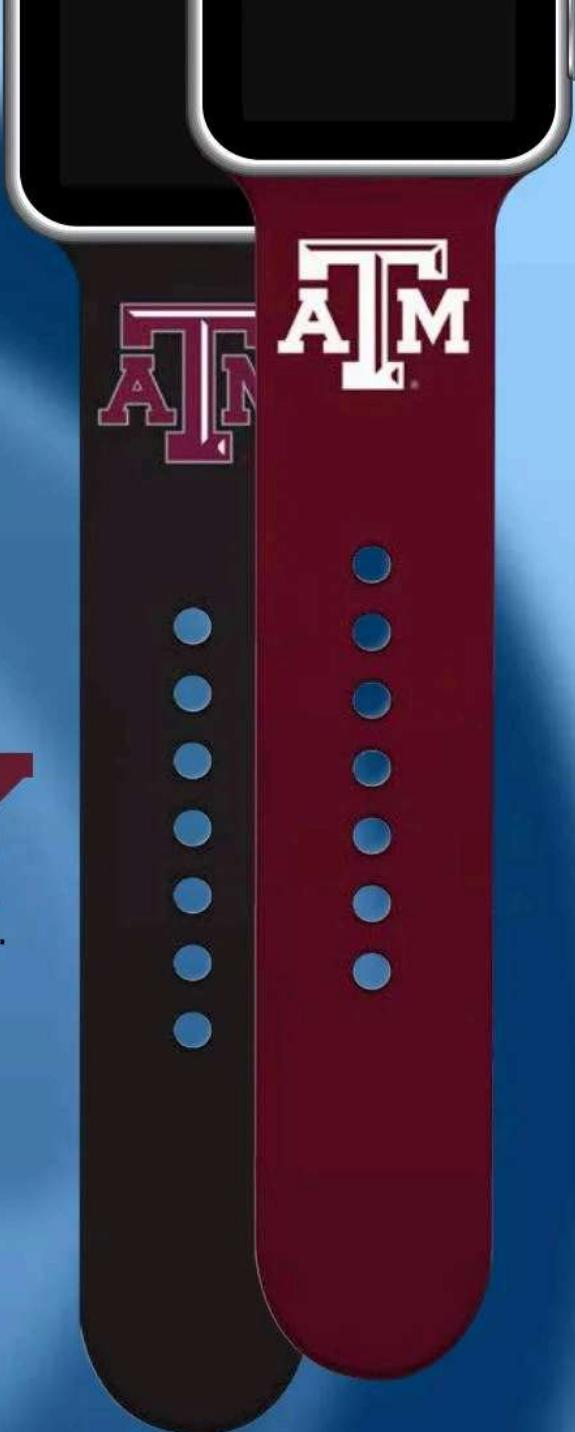


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**On the Cover:** Trayveon Williams high steps into the end zone for another touchdown. He has joined an elite list of running backs to run for over 1,000 yards in a season for Texas A&M. Photo by Rob Havens '88

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# Howdy Ags!

It has been so much fun covering Aggie football this fall. I know there have been a few times that the clock has run out and our opponents have had more points on the scoreboard, but how cool is it to see the growth and the culture change around our football program? In the first month of the season, the Ags faced the best two teams in the nation and almost beat one of them and played the other closer than any other team has all year.

The team has won close games on the road and beat an undefeated top 25 team at Kyle Field. The Aggies have gained respect around the nation and experts can sense something special is happening in College Station.

The players have bought in and Jimbo Fisher has created a winning attitude in the program. There is still work to be done but it's obvious this coaching staff has the ability to get this team to win championships. The SEC is a grind and it always will be, but high school players around the country are excited to play here in Aggieland and Coach Fisher's next recruiting class has already been ranked #1 in the country.

Jimbo has learned more about the culture here and according to his former players that have talked to him, he loves being at A&M.

As a member of the media, it has been so interesting to listen to him break down a game after he watches the film. He knows so much about the game of football and it is pretty amazing to hear his thoughts after a win or a loss.

I'm still really excited to see the Aggies finish up this season but I'm even more excited to see what he will do for this program over the next couple of years. There is a new buzz around the game that I haven't seen in Aggieland for a while. Not only has he brought confidence to the team but to the fan base as well!

Gig'em Ags!

*Rob '88*



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snapshot



## fantastic finish...

Trayveon Williams celebrates after leaping over a Wildcat defender and flipping into the end zone for the winning touchdown in overtime. Texas A&M defeated #13 Kentucky 20-14 before a capacity crowd at Kyle Field, giving the Ags their first top 25 home win since 2016. Williams became the leading rusher in the SEC after the head-to-head matchup with Wildcat's tailback Bennie Snell Jr., who entered the contest as the leagues best. Photos by Rob Havens '88









## last respects...

Company E-2 led by Reveille IX march to the north end of Kyle Field for the funeral of Reveille VIII. The Spirit of Aggieland echoed across the Plaza as Aggies gathered together to remember and honor the beloved mascot.

University President Michael K. Young led a group of honored guest including former handler Ryan Kreider '17 (inset picture) as they talked about what the First Lady of Aggieland meant to them and our university.

Photos by Rob Havens '88

snapshot





## college gameday...

ESPN's traveling college football preview show rolled into town for the Aggies' big game vs #2 Clemson. The 12th Man woke up early and were loud and proud as they introduced the country to the Spirit of Aggieland. Rece Davis, Lee Corso, Kirk Herbstreit & Desmond Howard got a chance to Saw 'Em Off with Aggie fans on site before the big game. Photos by Rob Havens '88



# Chicken



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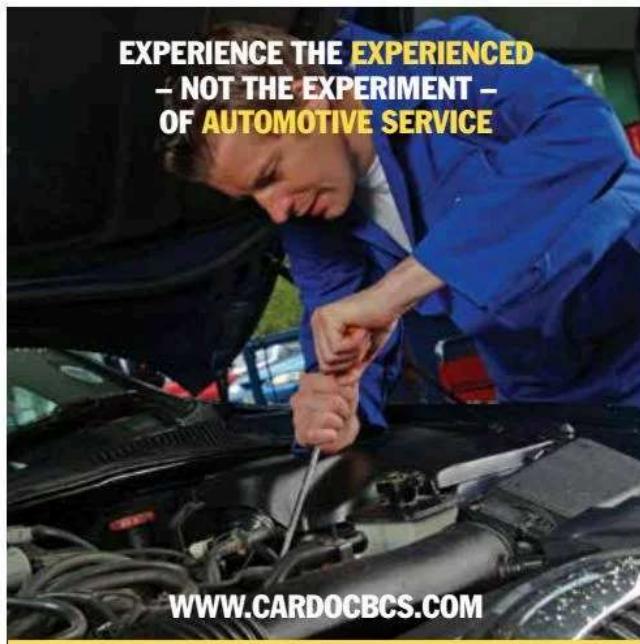
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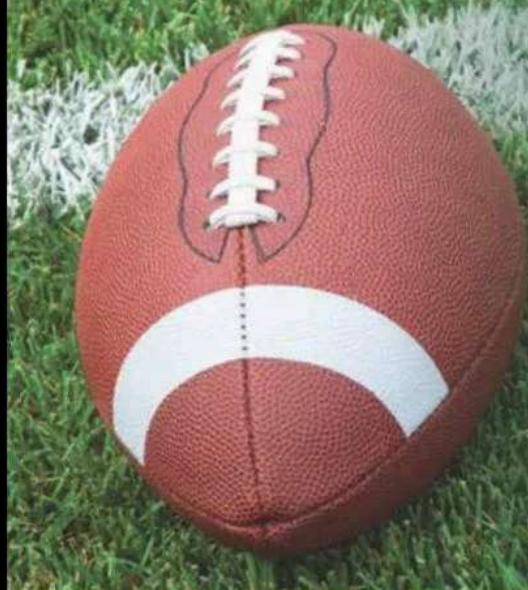
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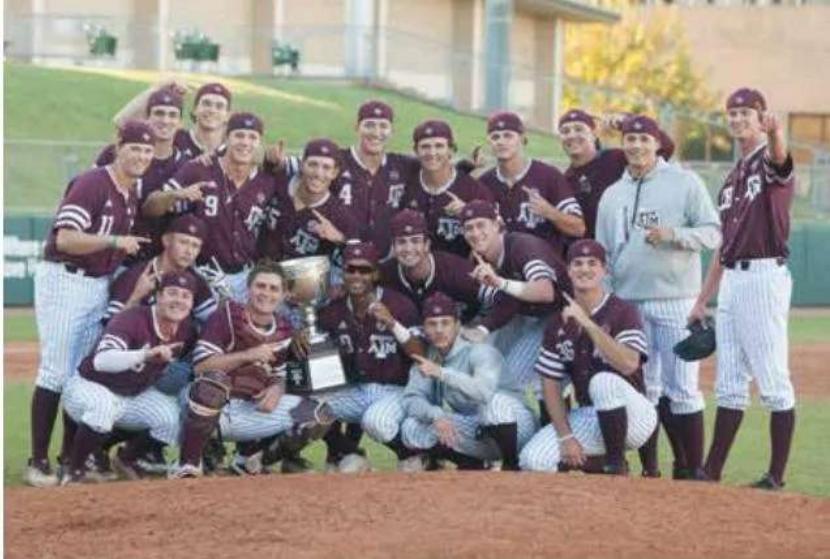
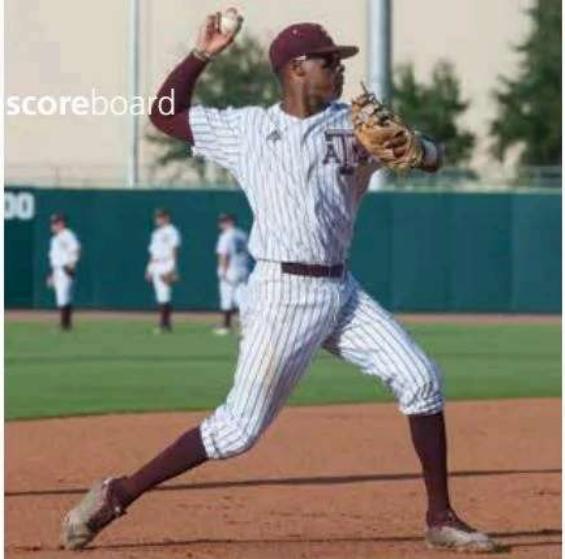
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# TEXAS ENT

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## scoreboard



**[baseball]** The Aggies wrapped up their fall practices with their annual Omaha Cup Championship Series. The Maroons squad defeated the Pinstripes in the best of three series. The winners earned bragging rights and a steak dinner served to them by their teammates on the losing squad. This was a different fall for the Ags as they played two exhibition games against Sam Houston State and Rice. The Aggies played both opponents in 12 inning affairs and came out on top in both games. There are a lot of new faces on this year's team but as always it looks like Childress and his staff have reloaded with some of the nations best talent.



**[equestrian]** Texas A&M started off the season with four straight wins over top ten opponents. The Aggies beat #4 Oklahoma State, #6 TCU, #8 South Carolina and #10 Fresno State. The Aggies are currently ranked #2 in the country. The team's 4-0 start was the first time for them to accomplish the feat since the 2011-12 campaign. The team carried that momentum into Auburn where they faced the #1 team in the nation. Unfortunately, they made some mistakes and came up short vs the Tigers. They have a lot of season to go and may get a chance to avenge their loss to Auburn in the SEC Championships later this year.



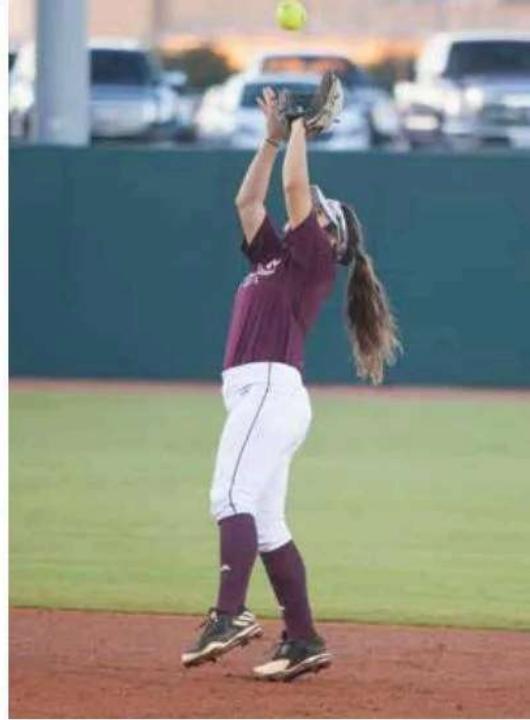
scoreboard



**[soccer]** The team was red hot at the beginning of the year winning their first ten games. They moved up the polls and were ranked as the second-best team in the country. Unfortunately, they caught a few bad breaks and lost two of their three final regular season games and finished 6-3-1 in the SEC. The Aggies earned a three seed in the SEC Tournament and it looked like their road to the final would be much easier after two-seed Tennessee was knocked out. But defensive powerhouse South Carolina shut down the high-powered Aggie offense and they were eliminated in their first game. The Aggies hope to recapture that fire they had in the first part of the season and make some waves in the NCAA tourney, they definitely have the talent to do it!



## scoreboard



**[softball]** The softball team has a lot of new faces on the field this year but after four fall games, it appears Coach Evans has just reloaded from last year's squad. The Aggies took a pair of wins from Blinn College, a 10-5 win over Galveston College and a 7-3 victory over Temple College. Senior Riley Sartain returns as a three-year starter at third base and is looking forward to leading this team. The Aggies also return junior outfielder Sarah Hudek and Kelbi Fortenberry who were big contributors from last year's squad. In the circle, Payton McBride comes back with the most innings pitched from all the staff and is ready to dominate again. Coach Evans has a lot of young talent as well that will compete for early playing time.



**[volleyball]** The volleyball team has been working hard and after 2/3 of the conference season sit at 6-6 in the SEC. They have battled with every opponent and have seven matches this fall that they forced to the fifth set but came up just short. Coach Bird has only one senior on this year's squad in libero Amy Houser who has willed this team to win in several matches. The Aggies currently sit at sixth place in the SEC standings and are working hard to finish strong and earn a postseason berth.



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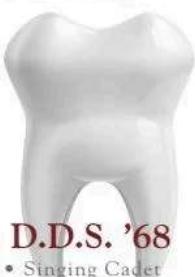


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# 2018 FOOTBALL **REWIND**

## GAME 1

7  
59

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NSU  
A&M

The new era of Aggie football under the leadership of Coach Jimbo Fisher began with a bang as the team dominated an overmatched Northwestern State team in record-setting fashion. Kellen Mond won the starting job after an eight-month competition with Nick Starkel and had great success directing Jimbo's offense, throwing for 184 yards and two touchdowns and a third score on the ground. The player of the game was Trayveon Williams who ran for 240 yards and three touchdowns in just over two-quarters of work. It was the second most yards by an Aggie running back in program history. The offense produced a school record 40 first downs and scored the most points in an opener since September 1997. Following a great spring and fall camp, tight end Jace Sternberger had five catches for 56 yards and two touchdowns in his Aggie debut. The Aggie defense held the Demons to only 251 total yards during the contest.



## GAME 2

28  
26 | CLEMSON  
A&M

The second game of the season and the biggest game of the week in college football would be a great measuring stick for Coach Fisher as the Aggies welcomed #2 Clemson to Kyle Field. The most watched game on national tv was a nail-biter as the Aggies came up just short of upsetting the Tigers. Texas A&M trailed Clemson 21-6 with five minutes left in the third quarter before the team turned things around and had a chance to tie with only :46 left in the game. The Ags started their comeback on a two play 78-yard drive that featured a 69-yard pass completion to Camron Buckley and a nine-yard touchdown catch by Kendrick Rogers. Trailing by eight points with just over two minutes remaining in the game, Quartney Davis caught a pass and fought his way to the goal line but lost the ball out of bounds. The referee called a touchback believing the ball had gone through the end zone and video replay was inconclusive causing the turnover. The defense held the Tigers and the offense got one last chance. Mond found Kendrick Rogers for a 24-yard touchdown and gave the Aggies a chance to tie it up, but the two-point conversion was intercepted and the team came up just short of the upset.



VS.



## GAME 3

**10** | **ULM**  
**48** | **A&M**

In game three, Texas A&M had their hands full with the Warhawks in the first half but pulled away in the second for a comfortable 38-point win. Special teams sparked the team when Dayton Mack blocked a field goal before the half and the ball fell into the waiting arms of linebacker Tyrel Dodson who raced 78 yards for the touchdown. The offense was still able to roll up 530 yards for the game. Trayveon Williams went over the century mark again rushing for 128 yards on the ground. The defense gave up more yardage in the first half but was able to adjust at halftime and limited ULM to only 67 yards in the second. The Warhawks punted three times and had one interception against the Aggie D which played much better in the second half. The defense had four sacks in the game. Kellen Mond moved the team with his arm and his feet, generating 210 yards through the air with a touchdown and 67 yards on the ground with two rushing touchdowns.



**ULM** vs. **ATM**

## GAME 4

**23** | **A&M**  
**45** | **ALABAMA**

For the second time in two weeks, the Aggies faced one of the country's best as they took on #1 in Tuscaloosa. After a great showing vs Clemson, the Ags were ready to compete against the defending National Champion. The Aggies limited the talented running game of the Crimson Tide to only 109 yards but unfortunately, the new starting quarterback for Bama, Tua Tagovailoa, carved up the secondary for 387 yards and four touchdowns and ended hopes for an upset on the road. There were some bright spots for the team as Kellen Mond gained 130 yards on the ground vs the Tide, including a 54-yard run that helped the team score a touchdown on a 99-yard drive. Nine different Aggies caught passes as Mond was able to spread the ball around during the game. Braden Mann had a career-best day launching 5 punts for 304 yards averaging 60.8 yards per punt, which broke an NCAA record that had stood for 35 years.



## GAME 5

# 17 24

## ARKANSAS A&M

Texas A&M headed to Dallas looking for its seventh straight win over the Hogs and the experts predicted a blow out win. But this year's version of the Southwest Classic was different as the Hogs rolled into the metroplex with a new head coach. And just like the games before, this one came down to the final drive. The Aggies came out strong, as freshman Jashaun Corbin took the opening kickoff and raced through the Arkansas defense untouched for a 100-yard touchdown return. They added 10 more points and it looked to be a blowout, but Mond had two costly interceptions that kept the game close and the Aggies had to battle to the end. In the fourth quarter, the offense put together a crucial 61-yard drive that ended with a 4-yard touchdown run by Trayveon Williams. The talented back finished the game with 152 yards rushing. With less than two minutes to go, the Hogs took over and were trying to drive down the field and tie up the game. But on a second and ten, Ty Storey threw up a long pass and Donovan Wilson intercepted it, clinching the victory for the Aggies.



VS.



## GAME 6

14  
20 | KENTUCKY  
A&M

Before the season, most fans had circled the Kentucky game as a win for the Aggies. But the Wildcats came into Kyle Field undefeated and ranked #13 in the nation. With SEC's top rusher, Benny Snell, in the backfield, the Aggies knew they would have their hands full. Before a capacity crowd and millions of people watching on TV, the defense shut down the talented back, holding Snell to only 60 yards rushing. They also shut down the Cats passing attack and only allowed 108 yards through the air. The Aggies were in control of the game up 14-7 until a late fumble by Mond was scooped up and taken back 40 yards for a Kentucky score tying the game. At the end of regulation, the score was tied at 14 and the Aggies won the coin toss and elected to defend first. The defense dominated again and Kingsley Keke sacked quarterback Terry Wilson on a 3rd and two forcing a 43-yard field goal attempt that hit the crossbar and gave the Ags a chance to win it. Behind the strength of their offensive line, the Aggies ran the ball down the Wildcat's throats and on the last play Trayveon Williams fought through a tackle and went 10 yards leaping over a pile, flipping over the top and landing in the end-zone for the game-winning touchdown. It was the first home victory over a ranked team at Kyle Field since 2016.



**UK** vs. **ATM**

## GAME 7

26  
23

A&M  
S. CAROLINA

In the past few seasons, the Aggies have faltered down the stretch after great starts under the previous coaching regime. The team was determined to change that as they rolled into Williams-Brice Stadium. The #22 ranked Aggies generated 458 yards of total offense including 353 in the air to hang 26 points on the Gamecocks. Jace Sternberger and Quartney Davis had monster games for the Aggies as they rolled up 272 yards of receiving and a touchdown between the two to help the offense move up and down the field. Seth Small had a great rebound day as the true freshman hit 4 field goals including a 52 yarder. Up 10 late in the game, it looked like the Aggies would put it away but Will Muschamp's squad would not go away as they scored a late touchdown with :48 to play. On the ensuing kickoff, South Carolina touched the ball before it went 10 yards on the onside attempt, allowing the Aggies to run out the clock.



## GAME 8

13  
28 | A&M  
MISS. STATE

The Aggies arrived in Starkville on a three-game winning streak following a bye week, while the Bulldogs struggled against a top ten LSU squad. Quarterback Nick Fitzgerald had been a thorn in the Aggies side during his time at State but came into the game unable to do much through the air this season. The senior QB rectified that as he went 6 for 7 passing on the first drive and threw a 25-yard touchdown to give the Dogs the lead. The Aggies rebounded and scored 10 unanswered points to give them the lead at the half, thanks to a late 34-yard touchdown pass from Mond to Quartney Davis just before the break. Unfortunately, the Aggies were only able to get three more points in the second half on a field goal from Seth Small and Mississippi State added three touchdowns to seal the deal. The Aggies kept the game within eight before Mond threw an interception in the end zone with 2:36 remaining in the game. Two plays later Fitzgerald broke through a hole and raced 76 yards for the final score. Even after the loss, the Aggies were selected as the #20 team in the first CFP Poll.





## PACE & PERIMETER KEY TO AGGIE HOOPS SUCCESS

Aggie men's basketball will have a whole new look this season after losing three of their most valuable players from last year's team to professional basketball and a fourth to graduation. Last year's squad had one of the tallest lineups in college basketball with an imposing front line that was a matchup problem for several of our opponents.

According to Billy Kennedy, this year's team will attempt to play with four perimeter players and one big. "We are playing with a different pace, trying to play a lot faster and play more perimeter guys on the court. We feel like that's going to be the strength of our team this year, as opposed to having a lot of bigs like we did last year," said Kennedy.

Billy wants to take advantage of his smaller, quicker lineup and hopes that the three-point line can be a big advantage for this year's team. In order to install the new offense, Kennedy brought in new assistant coach Jeff Reynolds this summer. Fans got the opportunity to see him in action as the veteran coach was very hands-on in the open practice and scrimmage the Aggies had in October.

Reynolds coaching background spans nearly 40 years and includes head coaching stints at Air Force, Wingate and NC Wesleyan. He comes to Aggieland after his most recent position on the staff of Buzz Williams at Virginia Tech.

On the bright side, the Aggies return senior guard Admon Gilder who has been an integral part of Kennedy's success over the last three years including two trips to the Sweet 16. Also returning is sophomore point guard TJ Starks who started the last fifteen games for the Aggies, averaging almost 10 points a game and 72 assists.

Jay Jay Chandler and Savion Flagg also saw big minutes last year and should be big factors in the success of this year's team.

The Aggies are excited about the addition of Wendell Mitchell who was one of the best JC players in the country last season. The talented guard played in 33 games last year for Trinity Valley Community College and averaged almost 20 points a game. The staff hopes he will be healthy and ready to play when the season gets started.

Inside the paint, Josh Nebo will take the court after sitting out the 17-18 year due to NCAA transfer rules. He played two years at Saint Francis before coming to A&M earning defensive player of the year with 89 blocked shots in the 16-17 season while averaging 12 rebounds and eight points a game.

Also inside Kennedy brought in graduate transfer Christian Mekowulu from Tennessee State. He was a three-year starter that averaged 8.5 points and 5.7 rebounds a game.

Kennedy likes the depth on the perimeter as one of the strengths of this team and having a 6'5 guard like Brandon Mahan can also cause some matchup problems for other teams.

This will be the first time since Kennedy was at Murray State that he has had the ability to run this many guards in the lineup. Something that he had great success with before coming to A&M. "We played three guards most of the time, and play a little bit more up-tempo," said Kennedy.

Having seen the success of teams like Golden State, Villanova, Kansas that are taking advantage of the three-point line, Billy hopes the new look Aggies can use that approach. He believes it will open up the floor and his athletic, small guys can take advantage of that.

He said, "Everybody we put on the floor can make a three, last year we thought that might have been the case at times, but it wasn't the case and the strength of our team this year will be able to drive it and play some one on one getting it in the paint and kicking it out for threes."



## BLAIR IN UNCHARTED WATERS AS HE STARTS 5 SOPHOMORES

Like a seasoned boat captain who has sailed into uncharted waters, Coach Gary Blair enters the '18-'19 season with a few firsts in his 32nd year as a college head coach. This season will be the first time he has started 5 sophomores, as well as the first time he has never had a freshman player on his squad.

The Aggies roster has nine sophomores, two juniors and two seniors. Last year they graduated four starters and will have only one returning starter. Danni Williams and Anriel Howard could have returned for one more season but chose to abandon ship and will play for the University of Texas and Mississippi State this year.

If you are going to guide your team with only one returning starter, it helps that she is one of the best players in the

women's game. Not only is she returning but according to Blair, Chennedy Carter is 30 percent better than she was at the end of last year.

"She has really bought into Starkey's defensive system... she's bought into the system of being a complete player, not just an offensive player," Blair said.

Coach believes most players improve the most between their freshman and sophomore year, for Carter, he said, "I think she improved more as a person, and I've never had to say that before, but her maturity as a person between her freshman and sophomore years, she's become a very good teammate. She's become more of a leader."

The Ags will need that leadership as the team takes the floor. Kayla Wells will start as the player with the most playing time after Carter from last year's team. She won the Sixth Man Award last season after playing in 33 games. Wells hit almost 50 percent of her shots from the field and a scorching 92.6 percent from the free throw line.

N'Dea Jones, Jada Walton, Kayla Wells and Chennedy Carter were all a part of the sophomore class that was ranked as the number eight recruiting class in the country and Blair is ready to start five sophomores this year. The Aggies will probably be the youngest team in the SEC, but with the confidence, experts have in Gary's system they are still picked to be in the top half of the league.

Blair said this team is going to be very strong at the one, two and the three position. He's also happy with the depth he has, including the point guard position with Shambria Washington who he says is doing a great job.

The toughest part will be replacing the 28 points and 20 rebounds from the four and the five spots. Coach Blair is not sure at this point how he will fill that void but he knows he has a couple of weeks to figure that out. He harkens back to the year they made it to the Elite Eight without a strong presence down low.

Last year Chennedy Carter was able to sneak up on some teams early on, but now the All-American will be facing some different defensive packages and will have to learn to distribute and score in different ways. Blair says this year he will have to be a better coach to figure out ways for the other four players on the floor to be able to score on teams that are focusing on Carter.

In preseason practices Aaliyah Wilson has been very impressive. According to Blair, "She will be the surprise of the league this year!" He expects the combo of Carter and Wilson to be one of the best backcourts in the SEC. He said Wilson is great at doing the little things to make the team better and is very coachable. Her hard work earned her the title of captain before even stepping on the floor for the first time.

Ciera Johnson is anxious to get on the floor again after having to sit out a year due to NCAA transfer rules after leaving Louisville. She was ranked as the number one post player in the 2016 class and a McDonalds All-American out of high school.

Although Coach Blair might feel like the old boat captain navigating in uncharted seas, there is no one better to guide this group of young talented ladies to make some waves in this upcoming season.

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## Women's Lacrosse Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Texas A&M Women's Lacrosse Team just celebrated its 25th anniversary as a club by earning a trip to the National Tournament in Salt Lake City last summer. The team had to come back from a five-point deficit against archrival Texas to earn a spot in the tournament.

Proving how much these ladies care about this club, several seniors on the team had to miss their graduation ceremony in order to make the trip. Club president, Elise McLaren, told Al that they held a mock graduation ceremony in a hotel conference room. Elise stated, "I still think there's no better way to send off graduating seniors than with a trip to nationals."

The current squad has 27 members, most of which have previous lacrosse experience. They practice three days a week in the fall and four days a week in

the spring.

This team is pretty young, according to McLaren, but Reeya Patel '21 is a very strong attacker/midfielder and Kate Mason '21 is a force on the defensive side.

Al asked Elise about the differences in the men's and women's game: "The men's game is more physical because it allows for more contact between players. The women's game relies more heavily on finesse and speed. Defense has to rely more on body positioning and less on body and stick checks."

When asked what makes a good lacrosse player, McLaren replied, "A good lacrosse player has field awareness and makes quick and smart decisions on and off the ball. They are also good team players and show athleticism and endurance. One thing that resonates with me from our coach, Lacey Rybarczyk, is having 'short-term memory.' This means that when we get scored against or make a mistake we don't let it affect the next play. A good lacrosse player is able to focus on what's next instead of what happened last."

It's obvious that this is a tight-knit group of young ladies. When we inquired what her favorite thing is about being on the team, McLaren told us, "My favorite thing about being on the team is getting to see some of my best friends almost every day and play the sport that we love together. The best part about being president is getting to watch people grow as players and as people through the sport and the club, whether they're new to lacrosse or just new to the team."



## Triathlon Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

One of the largest sport clubs at Texas A&M is the Triathlon Club, which began in 2003 and is made up of about 100 of the most physically fit students on campus. The sport is not for the weak at heart as it pushes athletes to the brink of their physical and emotional limits.

Members compete in races that include swimming, biking, and running. Although each athlete competes as an individual, the sport is scored like a cross-country race, with the top four men and women scoring points for their respective teams.

Club President, Zachary Henthorn, joined the team with the desire to continue to compete after his high school days in the sport. "I knew that the tri team at A&M was particularly very good and I really wanted to jump in and race hard for the team," Henthorn said.

The club started with just ten members and has continued to grow each year into a program that can compete on a national level. Only five to ten percent of the members who join have previous

triathlon experience. Most have an athletic background, and this club has been able to train and build athletes into very competitive participants.

We asked Zachary what makes a great triathlete: "The greatest triathletes come from the individuals with drive, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, and willingness to help out others. Being a great triathlete obviously take hours and hours of training a week, but the greatest triathletes I've met are the ones who are willing to take the time out of their day to help develop the new athletes every year. Triathlon has an extremely high learning curve due to the amount of sporting technique needed to be exceptional at all three sports. Our current coach and TAMU TRI alumni, Michael Arishita, was one of the greatest athletes our team has ever had. He was physical, a very strong athlete, and reached the podium in multiple races at our national championship; but his greatest attribute was his ability to inspire and help others, such as myself. His legacy led to many more top five national finishes—six in the last four years (three for the overall team, two for our men's team, and one for our women's team)."

The team returned to action this year after fourth-place finishes in the National Championship the last two years in a row, and it currently sits atop the scoring chart for the men's, women's, and team divisions for the conference after wins at TriWaco and Craig Ranch Triathlon this fall.



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